Dear Mr. Rowell, 9/6/90

Sorry I'm pressed for time in responding to your 9/2/90.

I feel that Clay Shaw was innocent of Garrison's charges.

I feel that Garrison and his staff were not fully prepared to go to trial and that they wasted their time following Grrison's hunches rather than conducting a real investigation. And there was no end to his hunches and theories. He worked them very hard in largely wasting their time.

In your The Third Decade article you make the mistake most critics make and believe Mark Lane's interpretations. He is capable of saying and doing anything that he thinks will promote himself or embarrass the government. You assumed, as he did, that Hoover had to be referring to the tape when he said it wasn't Oswald. He lumped the tape and the pictures together in his letter to Crowley. It is at least as reasonable to believe that he was saying the picture is not of Oswald. It isn't.

Lane did not "pry loose", as you say, all the Secret Service's files. He got a few at most. Most of what he sued for was already available. And did he make a big thing of what was already in the public domain, as his unique achievement.

As usual, HSCA was incompetent. The tape and picture were flown from Mexico City to Dallas 11/22, hand delivered by an FBI agent later a Republican Congressman. I got the FBI's records on that in one of my FOIA lawsuits. As usual, the FBI questioned the wrong agent, rather did not question the right one. Wallace Heitman met that plane a little after midnight 11/23.

It is new to me that the Commission had access to the tape.

Thanks and best wishes,

Harold

Harold Weisberg

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Frederick, MD. 21701

September 2, 1990

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

If possible, would you please take the time to read the material that I have enclosed. It has to do with the fact that I have written proof that the Warren Commission had access to the Mexico City CIA tape allegedly of Lee Harvey Oswald (which the government claims was erased prior to the JFK assassination).

I finally got David Belin to answer my letter to him and he in turn referred me to W. David Slawson. I have enclosed copies of letters from Belin and Slawson.

In my last letter to you I wrote:

> Do you think that Clay Shaw could have been found guilty if Jim Garrison and his staff had been better prepared for the trial?

You answered:

> There was no amount of preparation that should have convicted Shaw. Nothing prevented better preparation.

1. Do you feel that Clay Shaw was innocent?

2. Do you feel that Garrison and his staff were fully prepared to go to trial?

Thank you for your time Mr. Weisberg. I have enclosed a stamp in case you would like to answer my letter.

Regards,

Gary

G. J. Rowell
1529 Elizabeth
Bay City, Michigan
48708

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crowd (Benister, Ferrie, Marcello, etc.) to Milteer by way of Kent Courtney's circle. In the same vein, the House Select Committee seems to have failed to pursue the KKK angle. Life magazine, in its 8 September 1967 article, "The Mob, Part 2," pointed out that Carlos Marcello was using "muscle provided by the Ku Klux Klan" for his operations in east-central Louisiana as of that writing. Similarly, former RFK Justice Department staffer Walter Sheridan, in The Fall and Rise of Jimmy Hoffa (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972), p. 193, alleges that Teamsters chief Jimmy Hoffa contacted KKK figures during November, 1961 "in connection with strategy" against Justice Department scrutiny of Hoffa's dealings with an unsavory development scheme in Florida. Even more tantalizing, Hoffa was also facing legal action in Tennessee at the same time, in connection with the funneling of payoffs to him from one trucking firm through a second, which was based in Nashville. A grand jury began a probe in December of 1961, Hoffa was indicted in May, 1962, and he went on trial in Nashville in October, 1962. A mistrial was declared, on account of jury tampering, in December, 1962, and Hoffa ended up by being convicted for that tampering---in Chattanooga---in March, 1964 (Sheridan, pp. 196, 206, 221, 253-255, 309, 353-354). Therefore, the KKK scenario shapes up like this: (1) Hoffa worked with KKK elements over his legal problems in Florida in 1961; (2) Marcello, who backed Hoffa and has been linked with such dead suspects as Jack Ruby, David Ferrie and Guy Banister, also worked with KKK elements in the 1960s; (3) Milteer was linked to the KKK, and his November 9, 1963 conversation in Florida with Somersett touched on Jack Brown, of the Chattanooga-based Dixie Klan; (4) Hoffa was experiencing severe legal difficulties in Tennessee throughout the period 1962-64, and would ultimately be convicted in Chattanooga.

35. HSCA I, p. 116; HSCA Report, p. 91; HSCA VI, pp.242-257.
36. HSCA Report, pp. 402-404.
37. Model and Groden, JFK: The Case for Conspiracy, p. 301.
38. J. Harry Jones, Jr., A Private Army, rev. ed. (New York: Collier, 1969), pp. 92-93.
39. "Mysterious deaths mount to 25," National Enquirer, 22 November 1983; HSCA I, p. 121; Model and Groden, JFK: The Case for Conspiracy, p. 303.

BELIN'S BLOOPER

by

G.J. Rowell*

On the day after the brutal murder of President John F. Kennedy in the streets of Dallas, J. Edgar Hoover, the crusty old Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, addressed a letter to James J. Rowley, the Chief of the United States Secret Service.[1] Enclosed with the letter was a five-page document detailing the results of the first FBI inquiries into the assassination. It wasn't until years later that this document would see the light of day.

That day would not come in November of 1977, however, when the FBI released 40,001 pages of previously classified documents on the Kennedy assassination, including a sanitized version of the November 23, 1963 five-page report. The FBI had blanked out the bottom of page four and the top of page five. Why? What could be so important that it had to be withheld from the American public fourteen years after the assassination?

The blanks both puzzled and perplexed the dedicated assassination researchers until finally Mark Lane, author, researcher and critic of the Warren Commission, was able to secure a court order from the Federal District Court in Washington that pried loose the Secret Service files on the JFK assassination. In those files resided an uncensored version of the November 23, 1963 FBI report. The relevant portion of that document that was missing from the sanitized version reads as follows:

> "The Central Intelligence Agency advised that on October 1, 1963, an extremely sensitive source had reported that an individual identified himself as Lee Oswald, who contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City inquiring as to any messages. Special Agents of this Bureau, who have conversed with Oswald in Dallas, Texas, have observed photographs and have listened to a recording of his voice. These Special Agents are of the opinion that the above-referred-to individual was not Lee Harvey Oswald."

Come again?---"the above-referred-to individual was not Lee Harvey Oswald." Well, if it wasn't the Lee Harvey Oswald that was murdered in the basement of the city jail by Jack Ruby, then who was it? This question required some very serious investigation. Unfortunately, this question pointed towards a conspiracy and it was quickly brushed under the rug by the FBI. The question would have to be resolved at a later date by the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Was the HSCA able to resolve the controversy that had arisen? You will have to judge that for yourself. When The Final Assassinations Report of the HSCA was released in 1979 it had this to say about its investigation into the Mexico City tape matter:

> "A review of relevant FBI cable traffic established that at 7:23 P.M. (CST) on November 23, 1963, Dallas Special Agent-in-Charge Shanklin advised Director Hoover that only a report of this conversation was available, not an actual tape recording. On November 25, the Dallas office again apprised the Director that "[t]here appears to be some confusion in that no tapes were taken to Dallas*** [O]nly typewritten [reports were] supplied***"[2]

Shanklin stated in a committee interview that no recording was ever received by FBI officials in Dallas. Moreover, former FBI Special Agents James Hosty, John W. Fain, Burnett Tom Carter and Arnold J. Brown, each of whom had conversed with Oswald at one time, informed the committee that they had never listened to a recording of Oswald's voice.[3] (But did they listen to another voice that was not Oswald's?) The committee did not contact the three other FBI special agents who also conversed with Oswald at one time.

"Finally, on the basis of an extensive file review and detailed testimony by present and former CIA officials and employees, the committee determined that CIA headquarters never received a recording of Oswald's voice. (Author's note; again, it may be a matter of semantics---did they receive a tape that was not Oswald's voice?). The committee concluded, therefore, that the information in the November 23, 1963, letterhead memorandum was mistaken and did not provide a basis for concluding that there had been an Oswald imposter."[4]

Well, so much for the HSCA investigation. It is hardly a comforting thought that the HSCA relied heavily on the truthfulness of Dallas Special Agent-in-Charge J. Gordon Shanklin and Special Agent James P. Hosty, Jr., in as much as both were involved in the destruction of evidence in the JFK assassination; i.e., a note

addressed to Hosty which Oswald allegedly dropped off at the FBI office in Dallas.[5] Hosty claimed he tore up and disposed of the note on the direct orders of Shanklin. SAC Shanklin claims he gave no such order. Obviously, both of the Agents cannot be telling the truth about the destruction of the note---yet the HSCA found them both to be telling the truth about the Mexico City tape.

This is where the Mexico City tape situation stood until the night of November 11, 1983. On that particular night the ABC television news program Nightline was scheduled to do a feature on the assassination of President Kennedy. I had to go out and do some investigating on a case for my detective agency, so I taped the show for viewing at a later time. When I was finally able to find the time to watch the program, I found I was in for somewhat of a surprise. In fact, I wasn't sure that I had heard the tape correctly the first time, so I rewound the tape and asked my wife Darlene to watch the tape with me and verify the fact that I had heard it correctly. I still couldn't believe my ears, so I immediately sent for a transcript of the Nightline program. The following is based on excerpts from that transcript.

This particular program, which was entitled "JFK Assassination: Conspiracy Theories," featured anchorman Ted Koppel and guests: attorney Mark Lane, Representative Louis Stokes, journalist Ron Rosenbaum, and former Warren Commission attorney David Belin. (For the record, it should be noted that Mr. Koppel showed his pro-Warren Commission bias throughout the entire program.)

KOPPEL: Continuing our discussion now with attorney Mark Lane. Mr. Lane, forgive me. Help us not to get trapped in the arcane minutiae of this because we don't have the time to handle it. You told me you don't believe that he [Lee Harvey Oswald] did it alone...

LANE: I don't believe he did it at all.

KOPPEL: You don't believe he did it at all. All right.

LANE: No. I don't think he was involved in the shooting.

KOPPEL: Then at least help us out. You've spent 20 years of your life, I assume, trying to find out who did.

LANE: Well, lately I've been doing other things, but I have looked into it quite thoroughly, that's true. If you want my view as to who I think was involved, I'll tell you. And it's based upon some hard evidence but it can't be conclusive. I believe that---with Jim Garrison, the district attorney of New Orleans, that elements within the Central Intelligence Agency executed President John F. Kennedy. I believe that because in October 1963 the CIA left behind a trail in Mexico City claiming that a man named Lee Harvey Oswald went to the Soviet Embassy, checked in with a man called Kostikov, who the CIA told Earl Warren was a KGB official for the Soviet Union in charge of terror and assassination in the Western hemisphere. Oswald called the embassy; the CIA taped the telephone call, and Oswald said "This is Lee Oswald, are there any messages for me?" Oswald then went to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City and was arranging for a transit visa, ostensibly to Cuba after he killed the President. The only problem with the whole story is that it was not Lee Harvey Oswald. It was a charade designed by the Central Intelligence Agency in October 1963 to leave behind a series of acts, a trail which would lead to Lee Harvey Oswald after the assassination. That...

KOPPEL: All right, let's...

LANE: Let me say just one thing. That meant, of course---if I could just conclude it---that meant that in October of 1963 the Central Intelligence Agency was planning to place the blame on Oswald for an assassination which had not [been] committed but which obviously people within the CIA knew

was going to take place the next month.

KOPPEL: All right, David Belin, let's pick up on that one point. We do know now things about the CIA that we didn't know back then. And yet one of your commission members was, as Peter Lance pointed out, Allen Dulles, former director of the CIA. He might have shared some of that, don't you think?

BELIN: First of all, the Warren Commission did know that Oswald was in Mexico. The Warren Commission had access to the tape.

KOPPEL: No, no, no. that's not what I'm talking about. I mean, don't you think he might have shared with the commission his knowledge that the CIA had been involved in assassination attempts against Castro?

What's this?? As soon as David Belin admitted that the Warren Commission had access to the tapes, Ted Koppel changed the subject! Did Koppel know the significance of Belin's blunder? Was Koppel clued in via his earphone? One can only guess. However, the one person who should have known the significance of Belin's admission and should have pounced upon it like a thousand pound cat was Mark Lane---for Lane was the one who had uncovered the information about the Mexico City tape in the first place. Strangely, he did not pick up on it. Perhaps it was lost in the heat of the moment.

Subsequently, I wrote a letter of inquiry and sent a copy of the relevant portion of the Nightline broadcast to Mr. Belin at his law offices in Des Moines:

2-25-86

Dear Mr. Belin,

I appreciate the fact that you have taken the time over the years to be the spokesman for the Warren Commission.

If I may, I'd like to ask you a question about something that came up on the November 11, 1983 Nightline television show. Mr. Lane asserted that a Lee Harvey Oswald imposter phoned the Soviet Embassy in Mexico and that the CIA taped the call.

You replied to Mr. Lane: "First of all, the Warren Commission did know that Oswald was in Mexico. The Warren Commission had access to the tape." (See enclosed copy of 11-11-83 Nightline transcript).

In your opinion, did the voice on that tape sound like the voice of the Lee Harvey Oswald that was slain by Jack Ruby?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

G.J. Rowell

After a wait of approximately seven months, I received the following reply:

September 29, 1986

Dr. Mr. Rowell,

I am replying to your correspondence concerning the assassination of President Kennedy. Because of the large number of inquiries I receive on this matter, I do not have sufficient time to respond in detail to each. However, if you want to understand my views, I would suggest you go to the library and read a copy of my book, November 22, 1963: You Are the Jury. Also, I have written a number of articles on the subject, including those in the July 15, 1979 issue of the New York Times Magazine, and in the April 27, 1979 and September 28, 1979, issues of National Review.

There is also an earlier article in the February 6, 1976 issue of National Review.

Sincerely yours,

David W. Belin

I sincerely thought that Mr. Belin would want to take a few moments and clear the air on a matter that would appear to have a great impact on the entire government case against Lee Harvey Oswald. However, true to form, Mr. Belin chose to give me a weasal answer instead.

In light of Belin's startling admission on the Nightline show---and his refusal to answer any questions about it---the issue of the missing Mexico City tape could take on an even more sinister implication.

*1529 Elizabeth Bay City, Michigan 48708

Footnotes

1. Select Committee on Assassinations, U.S. House of Representatives, Report (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), pp. 249, 250; this source cited hereafter in format: HSCA Report 249, 250.
2. HSCA Report 250.
3. HSCA Report 250.
4. HSCA Report 250.
5. HSCA Report, pp. 195, 196

HOSTY'S REVELATION

bu

Ross F. Ralston*

In 1980, in an interview with Dallas Morning News reporter Earl Golz, Special Agent James P. Hosty of the FBI let off a self-described "bombshell" of information that Hosty had kept un-detonated during his depostion in 1978 to the House Select Committee on Assassinations.[1] This "information" was that the FBI had in its pre-investigation files on Lee Harvey Oswald the information that he had visited at the Soviet embassy in Mexico City in September 1963 with Valeriy Kostikov, a KGB agent responsible for terrorism and assassinations in the Western hemisphere. Hosty claimed that this information was kept from himself as he was being briefed for his Warren Commission appearance and never came to the attention of the Commission, as J. Edgar Hoover was apparently determined that no doubts about his "lone assassin" scenario would be allowed to surface. Had Hosty's bombshell been allowed to explode earlier, presumably both the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee on Assassinations would have entertained more serious suspicions that the KGB was behind the assassination.

Aside from the fact that there is serious question as to whether the real Oswald even visited the Russian or Cuban embassies in Mexico City, I published a CIA document thirteen years ago in my book that shows "Oswald" (or the man at the embassy) may never even have talked to Kostikov.[2] Commission document 1216 is a memorandum from the CIA to Warren Commission General Counsel J. Lee Rankin which states "(deleted) has checked its records for the period Oswald was in Mexico City and has advised it is quite possible that Oswald thought he had talked with Valeriy Kostikov when he actually had spoken to Yatskov." This document was

BELIN HARRIS HELMICK
TESDELL LAMSON McCORMICK

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July 18, 1990

Mr. G. J. Rowell
1529 Elizabeth
Bay City MI 48708

Dear Mr. Rowell:

Your June 9 letter arrived while I was out of the city. I make the following comments:

1. You refer to "stonewalling". Obviously, you do not know that I personally called for all documents in the archives, files of the FBI, and files of the CIA, to be made public. In addition, I filed Freedom of Information Act requests.

2. It is true that I am dealing "with a historical perspective that only you can provide", to quote your words--a perspective that includes not only documents but actual interviews of witnesses at the scene of the events. That is part of the bedrock of information which conclusively shows that Lee Harvey Oswald killed President Kennedy and Officer Tippit. To be candid, I do not believe that you have any of the first-hand information that I have.

3. When I stated on the "Nightline" television program that the Warren Commission had access to a Mexico City tape recording allegedly of Lee Harvey Oswald, it was my recollection that the two lawyers concentrating in the area of possible foreign conspiracy, W. David Slawson and William T. Coleman, did have access to that tape. You may want to write W. David Slawson who I believe is a Professor of Law at the University of Southern California, to verify this fact. He would be the one with the first-hand information, since he was concentrating in the area of investigation which included the trip of Lee Harvey Oswald to Mexico.

Sincerely yours,

David W. Belin

DWB:cs

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W. DAVID SLAWSON
TORREY H. WEBB PROFESSOR OF LAW

(213) 743-7383

August 24, 1990

Mr. G. J. Rowell
1529 Elizabeth
Bay City, Michigan 48708

Dear Mr. Rowell:

I was out of the country until recently and did not see your letter until I got back. Yes, we had access to the CIA tape of Oswald in Mexico City. I do not remember whether the voice sounded like his. It puzzles me how you think I should know anyway since I never met him. He was killed, you know, in 1963.

Sincerely,

W David Slawson

WDS/mp

cc: David W. Belin